

MEDIA Brief – Welcome to Video
Wednesday October 16th 2019

Paul Jenkins
Head of Americas Region
National Crime Agency

The investigation and indictment of Jong Woo Son sends a powerful message that paedophiles using the dark web are not safe from law enforcement and that we will work together to stop their offending. I'm immensely proud of the role that we played in identifying and catching the extremely dangerous offenders and rescuing their victims from abuse.

The Welcome to Video site first came to the NCA's attention during our investigation into Dr Matthew Falder, a prolific offender convicted of using the dark web to abuse victims. It was following that investigation that we initiated a taskforce response into the users and enablers of the Welcome to Video site. The taskforce involved NCA, Homeland Security Investigations, the Internal Revenue Service, South Korean National Police and Germany's Federal Criminal Police who all brought their respective specialist capabilities and operational reach to bear to identify and take down the offenders.

In the UK, 18 investigations were conducted against users of the site and seven men have already been convicted – including one jailed for 22 years for raping a five-year-old boy and appearing on Welcome To Video sexually abusing a three-year-old girl. These cases, and others like them, demonstrate the depravity of sophisticated and increasingly tech-savvy paedophile offenders and law enforcement's commitment to working together to tackle them and protect victims.

Leading the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime

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This case also illustrates exactly what the NCA sees in the increase in the scale, severity and complexity of child sexual abuse offending. It also demonstrates how effectively international law enforcement agencies collaborate and our collective capabilities to tackle offending wherever and however it takes place.

The NCA has seen increases in the numbers of offences reported and in online referrals of viewing or sharing of indecent images. There are round 3 million registered accounts across the 10 most harmful child sexual exploitation sites on the dark web. Some of this increase may be attributed to better detection capabilities and increased confidence on the part of victims to report their experience. It is, however, likely that the increase in reporting is a reflection of an actual increase in indecent images of children being shared and viewed online.

We also see more and more horrific offending with paedophiles viewing abuse images and going on to incite and commit contact abuse. In order to access the most disturbing online forums offenders will abuse children themselves to create new content to be uploaded and shared.

The use of the internet, dark web and encryption enable paedophiles to exploit victims anonymously, across jurisdictions and national borders, to develop networks and share abuse imagery in a way designed to avoid detection and, as in this case, to monetise their predatory behaviour through anonymised virtual currency transactions. All of this combined increases the challenge for law enforcement to identify and safeguard victims and to bring offenders to justice.